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# PROCEEDINGS

OF

## THE STATISTICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

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June 20, 1836.

Sir Charles LEMON, Bart., M.P., President, in the Chair.

Barker Joseph Benson, Esq., of Upper Woburn Place; Francis Clark, Esq., of Birmingham; Silas Taylor, Esq., of George Yard, Lombard Street; John Wray, Esq., of Suffolk Place, Pall Mall East; and Sir Francis Alexander Mackenzie, of Gairloch, Baronet; were elected Fellows of this Society.

The following Papers were read :—

I. “ Some data on the present state of Crime in England and Wales.” By Samuel Redgrave, Esq.

The Author observed that, for the purposes of Statistical enquiry, crimes may be properly divided into two classes—those punishable respectively on indictment and on summary process. In the present paper the former are alone included, as, of summary convictions, though now forming a very considerable branch of the statistics of crime, there does not exist any comprehensive and precise information that could be made available in an enquiry of this nature. The following calculations were stated to be founded upon documents prepared from the records of the Criminal Courts, which, though furnishing the best data

that can be obtained, do not shew the number of offences actually committed, (the only true test of the state of crime,) but the number of offenders only who have been proceeded against; and must, therefore, be more or less affected by the state of the Police, the facilities afforded to prosecutors, and various local causes.

The total number of persons charged with indictable offences at the Assizes and Sessions held during the year 1835, was 20,731, being in the proportion of 1 in 631 on the population as taken at the last census, or in England 1 in 637, in Wales 1 in 2,345. The city and county of Bristol has the greatest proportion of offenders, 1 in 272; Middlesex stands next, 1 in 395; and there are two other counties coming within the proportion of 1 in 500—namely, Warwick 1 in 445, and Surrey 1 in 483.

In the counties of Lancaster, Gloucester, Kent, Essex, Bedford, Oxford, Stafford, Norfolk, and Somerset, (giving them their due precedence in the ranks of crime,) the proportion is above 1 in 500, and under 1 in 600; in the counties of Hertford, Cheshire, Nottingham, Suffolk, Bucks and Cambridge, it is above 1 in 600, and under 1 in 700; in the counties of Southampton, Leicester, Wilts, Sussex, Worcester, Berks, Huntingdon, Hereford, Monmouth, Lincoln, Dorset and Devon, it is above 1 in 700, and under 1 in 1,000; in the counties of Salop, York, Northampton, Rutland, Derby and Cornwall, it is above 1 in 1,000, and under 1 in 1,500; and lastly, in the counties of Durham, Cumberland, Northumberland and Westmoreland, the proportion is 1 in 1,567, 1 in 1,697, 1 in 1,755, and 1 in 2,201 respectively. The number of offenders in several of the Welsh counties is so small, and the proportion would be so materially affected by the commitment of two or three persons more or less, that it was considered useless to enter into the detail of the twelve counties. The average proportion, as before mentioned, was 1 in 2,345—the maximum of crime being 1 in 1,391 in Glamorganshire, and the minimum 1 in 8,289 in Merionethshire.

It was observed that the position assigned to many counties would be materially altered if the atrocity of the offences as well as their number be considered, and that perhaps the best test

of this would be the proportion which the number of capital convictions in each county bears to the total number of offenders. The average for England and Wales is one capital conviction to every  $39\frac{1}{2}$  of the persons charged. In Bristol, where, comparing *the number of offenders with the population*, the proportion is the highest, the *proportion of capital convictions* is 1 in 215. In Middlesex, which stands next, it is 1 in  $62\frac{1}{2}$ ; in Warwick, which stands third, 1 in 26; in Lancaster, which stands fifth, 1 in 147; and in Gloucestershire, which follows Lancaster, one in 15. The counties having the greatest proportion of capital convictions are Berks 1 in 12, Wilts 1 in  $16\frac{1}{2}$ , Northampton 1 in 19, Oxford 1 in 23, Norfolk 1 in 28, and Gloucester and Warwick just mentioned: the proportion for Wales is 1 in 24.

The proportion in which the violent offences were committed in the several counties, will also afford a test of their relative state with regard to crime. The average of offences against the person was 9.72 per cent. The proportion exceeded 12 per cent. in the counties of Monmouth, Oxford, Bedford, Gloucester, Northumberland, Hants, Worcester and Hereford. In Middlesex and Kent it was within a fraction of 12 per cent. The average of violent offences against property was 6.53 per cent. In the counties of Worcester, Berks, Somerset, Warwick, Monmouth, Bucks, Bedford, Leicester and Shropshire it exceeded 10 per cent. In Oxford, Cambridge, Wilts, Chester, and Northampton, it approached very near to that amount. The malicious offences against property (offences characterized by the worst spirit which can prompt to the commission of crime) bear, fortunately, but a small proportion to the aggregate. They amount only to 0.75 per cent. Crimes of this nature have been of most frequent occurrence in the counties of Huntingdon, Bedford, Northampton, Glamorgan, Hertford, Leicester, Wilts, Sussex, Devon, Dorset, Lincoln, Stafford, Essex, Suffolk and Gloucester.

Of the above number of persons, 2849 were tried before the new Central Criminal Court; 3408 before the Circuit Assize Courts; 10,737 before the county Quarter Sessions Courts, and 3737 before Municipal Courts. The results of the trials were as follows: 523 were convicted and sentenced to death, of whom 34

were executed, 402 had their sentences commuted to transportation, and 82 to imprisonment, and 5 received free pardons ; 3,629 were sentenced to transportation, viz. 746 for life, 554 for 14 years, and 2,329 for 7 years ; 9,915 were sentenced to imprisonment, viz. 11 for 3 years and above 2 years, 290 for 2 years and above 1 year, 1,543 for 1 year and above 6 months, and 8,071 for six months, and under ; 58 were sentenced to be whipped, 351 to be fined, and 242 were discharged on sureties.

The above numbers sentenced to transportation include 789 persons, and those sentenced to imprisonment 71 persons, whose offences prior to 1832 would have subjected them to *Capital Punishment*.

These, with 11 cases in which judgment was respited and the prisoners ultimately pardoned, make a total of 14,729 persons convicted, or 71 per cent. of the numbers accused.

There were also 25 persons who were found insane.

4,034 were acquitted on trial, and 1,943 discharged without trial, the bills preferred not being found, or the prosecution being abandoned. The total acquitted and discharged was therefore 5,977, or nearly 29 per cent.

In offences against the person, the proportion acquitted and discharged was above 40 per cent., but, if some of the more heinous offences in this class are selected, it was far greater. In murder and attempts to murder (omitting those found insane) the proportion was 62 per cent. In rape, and assaults with intent to ravish,  $53\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. In violent offences against property 30 per cent. In offences against property committed without violence, nearly three-fourths of which are petty thefts, the proportion was 27 per cent. In the capital offence of arson, the proportion was higher than in any other. It amounted to above 84 per cent. In the malicious offences against property, the general proportion was  $68\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; in forgery and offences against the currency it was under 22 per cent. : the small proportion of acquittals in this class being, it was suggested, most pro-

bably owing to the prosecutions for offences against the coin being, with few exceptions, conducted by the solicitor to the Mint.

*Proportion of Males and Females.*—Of the total number charged, 17,275 were males and 3,456, or 1 in 6, females. In offences against the person generally, the proportion of females was nearly 1 in 9; but in the offence of murder it amounted to 1 in  $3\frac{1}{4}$ , while in the attempts to murder, on the contrary, it did not much exceed 1 in  $13\frac{1}{2}$ . In the violent offences against property the proportion was only 1 in 20. In the offences against property committed without violence, the proportion rises to 1 in  $5\frac{1}{3}$ ; and in forgery and offences against the currency to nearly 1 in 4.

The proportion of females was greater in Devonshire than in any other English county, being 1 in  $3\frac{3}{4}$ . In Northumberland it was 1 in 4. In Lancashire nearly 1 in  $4\frac{1}{2}$ . In Middlesex the same. In Bristol 1 in 5, and in Surrey 1 in  $5\frac{1}{2}$ . The proportion was lowest in Oxfordshire, 1 in 21. In Essex 1 in 13. In Cambridge and Berks 1 in  $12\frac{1}{2}$ . In Hertford, Bucks, Leicester, Sussex, and Worcester rather below 1 in 11.

*Ages of Criminals.*—295 males and 51 females, forming 1.67 per cent. of the total numbers charged, were aged 12 years, and under; 1707 males and 303 females, making together nearly one-tenth of the whole, were aged 16 years and above 12, and 5,257 males and 890 females were aged 21 years and above 16.

It appears therefore, that in the five years of life comprized between the age of 16 and 21, crime is most prevalent; 42 per cent. of the violent offences against property, and 29.65 per cent. of the aggregate being committed by offenders whose ages fall within this comparatively short term.

5,524 males and 1,093 females were aged 30 years and above 21, a period including nine years.

The ages of no less than 71.94 per cent. of the offenders do not exceed 30 years. After that age the number of criminals rapidly decreases: from 30 to 40, the proportion is 14.01 per

cent. ; from 40 to 50, 6.60 per cent. ; from 50 to 60, 3.24 per cent. ; and above that age 1.30 per cent. ; so that there are fewer criminals by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in the whole period of life after the age of 30, than in the five years before attaining 21.

The average proportion of offenders aged 16 years and under is 11.37 per cent. In Bristol it is 21.39 per cent. In Middlesex 14 per cent. In Warwick 15.73 per cent. In Surrey 14.90 per cent., and in Lancashire 13.68 per cent. The proportion also exceeds the average in the counties of Kent, Leicester, Nottingham, Somerset and Salop, and in Wales.

It will be remembered that Bristol, Middlesex, Warwick, Surrey and Lancaster have been pointed out as the five counties having the greatest proportion of crime. They have also the greatest proportion of juvenile offenders ; and, with the exception of Warwick, which was one per cent. below the average, the greatest proportion of females.

With reference to the subject of Education, the Author adverted to an attempt which had been made to ascertain the degree of instruction of every criminal brought before the Courts during the year, stating that as this was an experimental enquiry, and attended with some difficulty, it was limited to their capability to read and write, to read only, or their inability to do either. The result of this enquiry shewed that 8,802 persons, equal to 42.46 per cent. could read and write ; 4,321, or 20.84 per cent. could read only ; and 7,070, or 34.10 per cent. were uneducated.

Of those who could read and write, 1 in  $9\frac{1}{2}$  were females ; of those who could read only, nearly 1 in  $3\frac{2}{3}$  were females ; and of those who were unable to do either, 1 in  $5\frac{1}{3}$  were females.

Omitting those counties where the number of persons is too small to shew any results which may be depended upon, the greatest proportion of persons who could read and write was in Middlesex, 55.56 per cent. ; Leicester 53.46 per cent. ; Durham

53.08 per cent; Hants 52.72 per cent.; Cornwall 51.45 per cent.; and Surrey 51.44 per cent.

The proportion was lowest, not exceeding 30 per cent., in Wilts, Hertford and Bedford; and in Berks, Salop, Cambridge, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Derby and Worcester was under 35 per cent. In Warwick, Lancaster, Oxford and Bucks it barely exceeded that per centage.

The Metropolitan county was stated to have the greatest proportion of instructed criminals,—and also, with one exception, the greatest proportional amount of crime. But this, it was suggested, was not a result which could be generally established, for Lancashire, which ranks next in amount of crime, has 7 per cent. below the average of instruction. Again, in Wilts and Hants, two adjoining counties similarly circumstanced in so many respects, and in the amount of crime nearly parallel, the proportion being one criminal in 714 in the former, and one in 717 in the latter, the results with respect to instruction are widely different. In Wilts the proportion of criminals who could read and write was lower than in any other English county, being only 27.46 per cent. In Hants it was 52.72 per cent.—more than 10 per cent. above the average.

Mr. Redgrave explained that the above results were detailed from the interest which they may possess in themselves, and not with any intention of interfering in the question of how far crime is diminished by the influence of education. This question it had been considered advisable not to prejudge upon the data at present afforded, as more precise and specific information would be obtained for the year 1836, and would give the means of forming more just conclusions upon a question of so great interest, than could be come to at the present time.

He then proceeded to draw a comparison with former years, observing that from the year 1805, when authentic documents were first published, crime had increased with unchecked regularity, a slight decrease in any one year being invariably followed by a greater increase in the succeeding year. In 1817 crime made the most rapid advance on record. The increase in that



year was above 53 per cent., and was maintained, with only trifling fluctuations, till 1824. In 1825 a gradual increase again commenced, and at the expiration of another period of seven years amounted to above 32 per cent. In 1832 crime had reached its maximum. In 1833 it decreased nearly 4 per cent. In 1834 a further decrease, though only of 1 per cent. took place, but this was followed in 1835 by a more marked result, the decrease in that year being nearly 8 per cent., and making the aggregate decrease in the last three years little less than 13 per cent.

Making a comparison of the year 1835 with the average of the five preceding years, there was an increase in the offences against the person of above 7 per cent. (omitting from this calculation the assaults, and assaults on peace officers, which were not included in the tables previously to 1834.) In the violent offences against property there was a decrease of above  $11\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., principally in the offences of burglary and house-breaking. The fluctuations in these two offences were considered to be curious. In 1826 the number charged with burglary was 478, and with house-breaking 168. In June 1827 Sir Robert Peel's Act for consolidating and amending the criminal law came into operation, and the result in that year was divided; but in 1828 the numbers charged with these two offences had changed places, there being for burglary 249 and for house-breaking 494. The former offence continued gradually to decrease, and the latter proportionately to increase till 1833, when the numbers charged with burglary were only 98, and those charged with house-breaking had reached 679. It must not, however it was stated, be understood that this change took place in the number of these offences actually committed. It arose from the working of the altered law of 1827, under which persons whose offences were in fact burglary, that is house-breaking committed in the night-time, could be indicted for house-breaking only, the punishment being the same and the proof less difficult. In August 1833 another change took place, the capital punishment for house-breaking being abolished, these two offences were again placed on a different footing; and the effect was obvious in the numbers charged in the following year: they were, for burglary 227; for house-breaking 518. In the next year the burglaries had increased

to 281, and the house-breaking decreased to 381, which is the relative proportion of the two offences.

Resuming the comparison of the last year with the average of the preceding five years, in offences against property committed without violence, the decrease was above  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent; in malicious offences against property, nearly two-thirds; and in forgery and offences against the currency, 17 per cent.

The Author observed that the comparison of the *total* numbers in each county could only be made between the years 1834 and 1835, unless several offences which were first included in the tables of those years are extracted. Limited to that period, there would appear to have been a decrease of offenders last year in thirty English counties. In Northampton the decrease was above fifty per cent; in Herefordshire above  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd; in Berkshire, Cheshire, Hampshire and Worcestershire  $\frac{1}{4}$ th; and in Durham and Shropshire  $\frac{1}{5}$ th. In Middlesex it amounted to 17 per cent; in Yorkshire to 14 per cent.; in Lancashire to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and in Surrey to little more than 4 per cent.: in Wales the decrease on the total of the twelve counties was 27 per cent. In the remaining ten English counties and in Bristol there was an increase which was proportionally greatest in Gloucestershire, 19 per cent.; in Kent 15 per cent.; in Warwick 14 per cent.; and in Stafford 10 per cent.: in Essex the increase was above 8 per cent. The total decrease in England and Wales was 1720 persons or nearly 8 per cent.

Including the commuted punishments the decrease in the number transported was 414, and in the number imprisoned 784.

In the number of *Executions* a great diminution has for several years been gradually taking place, not arising however from a decrease of crime, but partly from the abolition of capital punishments in many offences; and, chiefly, from the more mild administration of the law. This, it was considered, would be clearly exemplified by the following

TABLE, shewing the proportion of Executions to capital convictions during the last 26 years, and the number of capital convictions, and executions which took place for offences not now capital.

PERIOD.	Number of Capital Convic- tions.	No. of Exe- cutions	Propor- tion of Execu- tions to Capital Convic- tions.	Number of Offences not now Capital.	
				Convic- tions.	Execu- tions.
Seven years ending 1816	4,216	536	1 in 7.7	2,491	160
do. 1823	8,224	691	1 in 12	4,632	212
do. 1830	8,778	425	1 in 20.6	5,605	128
Five years ending 1835	5,059	210	1 in 24	2,540	8

It is proved by these figures that, while the laws have been rendered more lenient by the abolition of capital punishment in several of the less atrocious offences, executions have been far less frequent in those offences still subject to capital punishment. In burglary, for instance, twenty years ago, taking the aggregate of five years, the executions were in the proportion of 1 in 7 to the capital convictions. In the last five years 1 in 92 only. The changes in the law respecting burglary and house-breaking, already noticed, will have affected this calculation, but as it is more than probable that the six cases of house-breaking executed within the last five years were in fact burglary, that circumstance may be deemed a just set-off against the number of burglaries indicted as house-breaking, and the proportion shewn by the criminal returns be taken as the true one. This supposition would reduce the eight persons stated in the above Table to have been executed during the last five years for offences not at this time capital, to two.

But the offence of Robbery will be a better criterion; no changes having been made in the laws respecting it. Compared for the same periods as above, the proportions appear to be, in the five years ending in 1815, 1 in  $6\frac{2}{10}$ ths executed; in the five years ending in 1835, 1 in 58.

The results, if tried on the most atrocious offences, do not appear less decisive. For murder and attempts to murder, comparing the same periods, there were executed in the earlier period, 1 in every  $2\frac{1}{2}$  convicted; in the later, 1 in every  $4\frac{1}{2}$  only.

Of the total number executed during the last five years, nearly

one-third was for arson alone. Had it not been for the unfortunate prevalence of this offence since 1829, the decrease in the number of executions would have been of course very much greater.

The principal points upon which a comparison of the state of crime in England and Wales, with Scotland, Ireland and France could be instituted, are shewn in the following Table:—

Country and Date.	Proportion of Offenders to the Population.	Proportion of Females to Males.	Proportion of Offenders aged 16 and under.	Proportion of Acquittals.	Proportion of Capital Convictions to Commitments.	Proportion of Executions to Capital Convictions.	Proportion able to Read and Write.
England & Wales 1835	1 in 631	1 in 61	8.8	1 in 3.47	1 in 39.6	1 in 15.4	1 in 2.3
Scotland ..... 1834	1 in 872	1 in 4.6	unknown	1 in 3.86	1 in 452	1 in 1.5	unknown
Ireland ..... 1835	1 in 336	1 in 5.6	19.1	1 in 3.54	1 in 167	1 in 6.6	1 in 3
France ..... 1833	1 in 581	1 in 6.1	71	1 in 2.03	1 in 1100	1 in 1.5	1 in 2.4

The total amount of crime in France, on which the proportion of offenders to the population in that country was estimated, was stated to have been obtained by adding to the number tried before the

*Cours d'Assise*, such offences tried before the *Tribunaux Correctionnels*, as appeared of the same grade with those included in the Tables for the United Kingdom. This selection did not include one-fourth of the persons brought before these courts. The proportion of acquittals was made on the trials by a jury before the *Cours d'Assise*.

The Author adverted, in the last place, to the *cost of crime*, stating that the following calculations, though they can only be deemed an approximation to the truth, yet place the subject in a striking point of view, and are sufficiently correct to shew that however important the decrease of crime may be considered by the philanthopist, it is not less so to the political economist. The county-rate commissioners in their preliminary report state, that the average expense of a prosecution at the assizes is about 19*l.*, at the quarter sessions 7*l.* 10*s.*, and at Municipal Courts 5*l.* 8*s.* 6*d.* At these rates, the expenses of prosecutions last year would be. . . . . £186,915

In the Lords' Report on County Rates the Expenses of Prisons for one year are stated to amount to . . . . . 177,245

And the maintenance of Prisoners to . . . . . 127,297.

To these sums must be added the annual charge for maintaining Transports at home and in Bermuda—about. . . . . 75,000

In New South Wales, and Van Dieman's Land 130,000

And in the Penitentiary . . . . . 20,000

Total per Annum . . . . . £716,457

It was observed that if to these sums, which are all taken from Parliamentary Papers, could be ascertained and added the expenses of the Judges, Clerks of Assize, and many other attendant charges, the amount would be considerably increased; but, if the costs incurred in the *prevention* of crime were included in the calculation, the amount would be almost doubled; and of this some idea

might be formed from the expenses of the Police Establishments of the metropolis alone, which are not less than £300,000 per annum. Mr. Redgrave concluded by suggesting that supposing the total annual cost to the country for the prevention, prosecution, and punishment of crime to be one million and a half, and the number of persons living by the violation of the laws to be 50,000, the good behaviour of every criminal might be purchased by a gratuity of 30*l.* per annum, and the public be the gainers by the arrangement, of the whole amount of the property of which they are annually plundered, and of a feeling of security above all price.

II. “Some observations on the principles to be followed in preparing a Report on the food of the Metropolis.” By the Right Hon. Holt Mackenzie, Vice-President.

The Committee, which has been appointed to consider the means of preparing a Statistical account of London, having proposed to commence a series of contributions towards that end by a paper on the food of the Metropolis, it appeared to Mr. Mackenzie, as a member of that Committee, to be desirable that the Fellows of the Society should have their attention directed to the subject, in order that the Committee might obtain the co-operation and assistance of all who have it in their power to furnish information in regard to it, or to indicate the sources whence such information is to be derived. He ventured therefore to submit a few remarks in the hope that they might have the beneficial effect of eliciting from others some valuable suggestions.

On the general importance of the subject he considered it to be unnecessary to dilate ; observing, that the regular supply of so vast a population as that of the Metropolis, with the infinite variety of things which their necessities require or appetites demand, drawn from such various and distant sources by the separate action of such a multitude of agents, and this without the exertion of any apparent power to regulate or combine their efforts, might justly be regarded as one of the most singular results of the moral mechanism of society that has ever been presented to the Philosopher : while it seemed hardly possible that the detailed examination of the means producing it, should not afford some instruction also to the statesman.

The Author expressed his belief, that few things more strongly mark the condition of a people than the national food—the abundance or the scarcity; the regularity or fluctuation of its supply. In its choice, and in the habits arising out of that choice, the great bulk of mankind whose lot it is to eat their bread in the sweat of their brow, might be considered to be in a great measure, the masters of their destiny. He suggested, therefore, that it should be the business of the Committee not merely to present those general statements of the kinds, quantities and sources of supply which are furnished by public records, but also to present according to its means and materials, such minute particulars in regard to the distribution and consumption of food among different classes, and at different periods, as should serve to illustrate the habits and conditions of private life, and to develop the circumstances and prospects of society: adding that, as the facts bearing upon these points must be collected from various quarters, and as their accumulation in due quantity must depend on the separate contributions of many observers, the Committee could not be deemed unreasonable in looking for aid to the members of the Society generally, or in urging upon them the necessity of a general co-operation towards the attainment of the object contemplated, if that object were desired or approved. He observed that general averages applied to so large a population as that of the metropolis, consisting of classes placed in so great a diversity of circumstances, could not be altogether satisfactory. Men did not live by average. Nay, the worst condition of a country was perhaps that in which the want of one class is contrasted with, (it could not be counterbalanced by), the excess of another. To ascertain therefore, how far general ease may be inferred from apparent abundance, was surely a legitimate and very important branch of enquiry. Whether the point be one, on which the inquirer could be fully satisfied, was, he said, a different question. It was at least the business of the Committee not to decide it negatively, until they had fairly made the trial. But the trial could only be said to have been fairly made, after an enquiry as minute and diversified, as the subject-matter is extensive and complicated: and he could not too often repeat that in anticipating advantage from the institution of this Society, we must look mainly to those co-operative and cumulative labours, by which we may

hope to supply the defects, and correct the errors of individual observers.

He then proceeded to state that the subject, including wines and spirituous liquors, would naturally lead to an investigation of that most important march of public morals, the prevalence of temperance or intoxication, and the use and abuse of stimulants not directed to medical objects; adding, that this was especially a case, in which it would not be sufficient to compare the aggregate quantity consumed, unless it were also endeavoured to ascertain those circumstances of local or temporary manners, which regulate individual consumption: for, of things innocent or beneficial, when moderately used, the average consumption might be large without a corresponding amount of individual excess; and of things deemed pernicious, the same extent of demand might, under different circumstances, indicate very different degrees of evil.

Mr. Mackenzie here took occasion to relate that in passing through a part of India, occupied by the Seekhs, among whom the use of opium is general, he could perceive no symptoms of any extraordinary want of health or vigour; though the signs of excess in the use of that drug, are, in individual cases, abundantly manifest. In like manner, he had understood that the labouring classes of the Chinese are seen to awake from the delightful dream, which its inhaled essence is said to produce, with little or no incapacity for the active business of life. It would, he observed, be consolatory, if we should find, in the details relative to the consumption of spirits or intoxicating drugs, in the metropolis, a confirmation of the general conclusions to be drawn from the improved value of human life, without the drawback of any accession to the catalogue of individual crimes and sufferings, by which it is stained. He stated that in contrasting the supply and demand of different periods, the Committee would have occasion to mark alterations in the habits and conditions of our citizens. But the enquiry must lead them to develop some of the most important circumstances of the commerce and colonial relations of the country; and, in a certain sense, the subject might be said to embrace all the quarters of the globe. They would alike have to trace the



operations of new wants which have stimulated production, and of new contrivances, which have facilitated supply ; and would see, as it were, national wealth created by an apparently arbitrary exertion of the national will, or by a seemingly capricious direction of the national taste. Not to speak of luxuries, which may seem merely to pamper the appetite of a few, nor of the various productions which the garden affords to a populous and rich metropolis, how much, he said, of the national wealth might never have existed, had not the general taste of the people given a value to the leaves of the Tea and the Tobacco plants, and stimulated them to produce the means of purchasing those articles ! The effects of easy communication, by the construction or improvement of roads or canals, and above all the consequences of steam navigation, in bringing within reach of the metropolis the most distant parts of the island, would shew themselves in a very remarkable manner, on the field of enquiry that it was proposed to traverse ; and under this head, the Committee might hope to record a vast number of interesting particulars, if they could command the hearty co-operation of the Fellows. He explained that their object was not merely to give any detail of what is consumed, but to exhibit all-important and interesting consequences, on the national condition, which may appear to flow immediately from the demand of the metropolis, in the various places in which that demand is felt.

As connected with the agriculture of the country, Mr. Mackenzie considered it to be an important point to ascertain the average weight of the cattle sold or slaughtered in London, without which indeed the Smithfield returns must convey a very imperfect notion of the real supply of food. Yet, in the latest statement which he had seen on this subject, reference was made to the work of Eden, published in 1797, as if it represented the condition of things at the present time. He thought it was highly desirable to ascertain how the fact really stands ; it being likely that a considerable change may have occurred in the course of thirty years.\*

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\* See *McCulloch's Dictionary* ; and *Edinburgh Review*, No. 126 : in the latter the gross weight of Eden is erroneously contrasted with the nett of Davenant.

Having thus endeavoured to point out in a general way, some of the views of the Committee, in regard to the less obvious relations of their subject, for the adequate fulfilment of which they must, he thought, depend in a great measure upon the aid of contributions from the Fellows of the Society,—Mr. Mackenzie communicated to the meeting, that, as the first step in the work on which they are engaged, the Committee had prepared lists of every description of food consumed in London (using the word food in its most comprehensive sense); stating that, with reference to those lists, the Committee hoped that members would be good enough to communicate to the Secretary any information which they might possess, or could easily obtain on the following points relative to each article or class of articles :—

Different articles—When, and how introduced—Sources of supply—Home—Foreign.

Relative importance of each—when opened—circumstances affecting abundance and regularity of supply.

Prices—rise and fall of—what, and how occasioned.

Use of different articles among different classes—how far progressive—by what circumstances influenced.

Effect of on general wealth—on Revenue—on individual comfort—on health—on consumption of other articles—on trade—on Agriculture—on rents—direct—indirect—distribution of—wholesale—retail.

Means of ascertaining quantities and qualities of each article, and other points above mentioned.

Mr. Mackenzie concluded by observing that the Committee proposed to draw up a set of forms, for the purpose of giving system and unity to the enquiries and returns of those gentlemen who might be inclined to aid them. These would of course be distributed; but the Committee would by no means wish to restrict their contributors by any formality of report. The slightest note of any important fact, or of the means of ascertaining it, would be valuable and acceptable: the labour of collecting, digesting, and arranging, he said, the Committee of course acknowledged to belong to them, and to the officers of the Society.